

2002-Eckhart Tolle Gateways to living in in the now

[Speaker 1] (0:20 - 1:01:59)

GATEWAYS TO LIVING IN THE NOW The dilemma of humanity is and has been for a long, long time that we identify almost exclusively with mind activity. If you look at the nature of the human mind in a very basic way, the first thing that strikes you is that it is extremely active. It goes on and on.

It hardly ever stops. There is a continuous stream of thought that goes through one's head. It is a noise that you don't seem to be able to switch off.

The vast majority of our thoughts is repetitive, completely repetitive. And a large percentage of that is unnecessary. Thought is not being applied specifically to a particular purpose.

It does not address anything specific that needs to be done now. It is just there. It's mental noise.

Whether you want it or whether you need it or not, you are condemned to living with a noise machine in the head. This is so normal that hardly anybody ever questions that you can't stop thinking. Some thoughts are fine and there may be a few nice thoughts, but most thoughts are problematic.

You can look at your own mind to see how often thought is concerned with problems. And in most cases, it is not a problem that is here, now, that is actual, real. It is a problem that is generated in and through mental noise.

This is the case, for example, when you worry. You're in bed, warm, protected. It's all quiet, you're breathing.

But you're worried. Mental noise is in a state of hyperactivity. All this is so normal.

And if that were all, that would be bad enough. To be continuously trapped in mental noise and not being able to get out of it. But there's more to it than that.

Because mental noise these days starts at a very early age. After a while, your whole essence of who you are, your sense of self, of identity, your essential sense of me, is bound up with thought activity. When you tell yourself who you are, a mental image comes into being of who you think you are.

A me. You will find that a lot of the thought activity that goes on has to do with me. The me in the head.

The image of who I think I am. Me and my problems. A lot of thought focuses on me and my problems.

And how I'm going to get out of them. How I'm going to solve them. Thought does not realize that its activity itself, to a large extent, creates the problems.

It says, no, I'm thinking so hard and I'm worrying about this because I need to be responsible for my life. If I don't worry anymore, if I don't continuously think about me and my problems, what's going to happen to me? My life will collapse.

Seeking one's identity in and through thought is normal. When you speak the word I, which is perhaps the most frequently used word in the language, when you speak the word I, it usually refers to me. The mind-based sense of self.

The me that I think I am. Me and my story, which I dwell on almost continuously. There's the famous statement from the philosopher Descartes.

He wanted to examine to find out what the most fundamental truth of human existence is. And he concluded, I think, therefore I am. He equated thought with being.

So even at his time, it was already normal to equate who you are with mind activity. Is the essence of your identity, of who you are, the content of your mind and the corresponding emotions that reflect in the body the content of your mind? Is that the essence of who you are?

You are listening to this now because you want to explore whether there is something deeper to you than thought and emotions. A life story begins in childhood at the age of one and a half or two. Whenever the child starts to speak, one of the first things the child learns is to speak their name.

The question that the parents ask a child is, what is your name? The child learns to repeat their name and comes to equate the name with who they are. That sounds pretty harmless.

And of course, it is inevitable. I'm not saying don't tell a child their name. But you can see there's a transition there from a state of the one year old in whom the mind has not started up yet, but who is already conscious of others and conscious of surroundings and conscious of sense perceptions.

But thought processes, conceptual thought, has not yet started. The child has not yet accumulated words in the mind. The mental accumulations haven't started yet.

You can look into the eyes of a one year old and see something that is of such purity and aliveness and light looking at you. There is consciousness looking through those eyes at you. Now the name is not enough.

More things now need to accumulate that are connected to the name. You can look at your name as the receptacle or basket that provides the container for further content,

mental content, with which you identify as yourself. Experiences, opinions, your parents' opinions of who you are, that is very important content of who you are.

So if your parents tell you that you are a slow learner, you add that mental content to the basket that has your name on it. Once the content is in the basket, it is very hard to get rid of it. Other content, experiences, knowledge, sufferings, people that you know, cultural background, many things form the content of your mind and around it there is the name that holds it all together.

The content is added to the name. Your identity of me gets stronger. After a few years of accumulating content, then you think you know who you are.

But it is never quite enough yet, and not only for a young person. As you grow older, you will find that your sense of self very rarely really feels complete, and then only for a few brief moments. I'm not enough yet.

That's the essential belief of a mind-based sense of self. And on the level of doing, of course, it's true, because there's always so much more that you could do. There are innumerable things that you could do, but there just isn't enough time.

Even if you lived for a thousand years, you couldn't explore all of the possible things that you could do. So, eventually, you choose one main course of action or several main activities and with these exclude many others. Or you try to get to some projected goal, the pinnacle of your profession or whatever it is.

I need to get there to be myself, to be fully myself. I need that recognition. And for years, you work towards that.

Maybe you get there, and maybe you don't. Many don't, because not everybody can triumph. You can only make it, in other words, enhance your sense of self in the eyes of the world through making it, only if many others don't make it.

Otherwise, it doesn't make sense. It doesn't work anymore. Making it would then become meaningless.

Of course, you want to tell yourself in the mind that you have made it. And perhaps others will confirm it to you that you have indeed made it. But if you can't make it, then you can gain a specialness through failing.

Who were me who failed, who didn't make it? Because the world treated me unfairly and life circumstances were hostile, and I had a bad start in life. In this way, an image of me can be formed of somebody who has been wronged, and so you can add that to the content of your mind.

That is one of many possibilities. Being wronged by the world, or by a particular person,

or your parents. That can create a very strong sense of self too, a sense of having failed.

I have failed in the eyes of the world. I had a few chances, or I never had a chance, and somehow it didn't work out and I didn't make it. A very unhappy sense of self, a miserable sense of self, gives you an identity too.

You can talk to others about why you are miserable and what the world has done to you, or whatever it is. In this way, you can strengthen your poor me-identity. And others are likely to confirm it.

They listen and say, yes, you are right. A woman came to see me whose main story was how unhappy her marriage was. She was continuously thinking about how difficult her husband was to live with.

She was always reacting to his behavior. Whatever he did was irritating to her, the way he ate, the way he sat there, the way he spoke. Her sense of self was based on that reactive irritation and all the mind activity around it.

After a few months, I pointed out to her that she can either leave him, or she can observe that particular reactive mind pattern with which she was identified, and actually allow him to be, instead of reacting. There was a moment when she saw the possibility of freedom, of stepping out of that mind-based sense of self. And then she said, but if I let go of that, what have I got left?

Her feeling was, I need that. Who am I without it? A pattern that I've been identified with in the mind for 10, 20, or 30 years.

If I let go of that, who am I? If I let go of my sad story, and this applies to quite a few people, who am I without that? Once a particular sense of self has established itself in the mind, there's a great reluctance to let go of that.

Every therapist knows how strong the compulsion is to sabotage awareness. How strong the compulsion is to hang on to the sense of self. One person who thinks they have made it, and the other who thinks they have failed, are two extremes.

Most people fluctuate between the two. For a few days you think you're fine, and then suddenly some critical remark by somebody diminishes your sense of self. It's important to see that no matter how successful you've been in the eyes of the world, the sense of self that is mind-derived, thought-derived, is never at ease and fulfilled for long.

It is in the nature of the mind-based sense of self to feel a sense of lack and unfulfillment. It's a very common mistake to believe that through adding certain things to the image of who you are, accumulated knowledge, recognition from other people, a beautiful wife, a rich husband, a new home, or an expensive car, that you will be able to complete yourself through that, to finally arrive, to have found a happy ending to your

story. But you cannot find out who you truly are by using future to add further content to the me, and in that way find completion.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't add more knowledge or more expertise to your life. That's all wonderful. Of course, you need future to learn new things, to acquire new knowledge.

For all that, you need future. But seeking an enhanced or strengthened or more complete sense of self through that is very frustrating, and it is futile. You never arrive at that sense of self, even if you add more content endlessly.

It is never enough. It may feel enough for a little while, but soon you'll again realize, oh, that wasn't quite it. You may form a mental image of success in material terms and try finding fulfillment through adding more things to your life and identifying with them.

They feel good for a while. You have the car and the big house, all the trappings of material success. It feels good to have these things for a little while.

At first, when you sit in your big car, it feels good. Others notice you. But after a while, it wears off.

After a while, it becomes just you sitting in this thing. It has four wheels, and it takes you from A to B. Yes, it is more comfortable than other cars, but really not fulfilling anymore.

See the fallacy of seeking yourself in the future. See the fallacy of seeking yourself outside yourself. The one thing that is inseparable from life itself is the field of now.

Life is always now. Nobody could argue with that. And then to miss the now almost continuously by chasing after some mental abstraction of future, what a life.

To do this is to miss the one thing that is real for a mental projection. The very thing you've been looking for in the future, yourself, you find where you hadn't been looking all of that time. You find that it is already here, now.

So on a deeper level, there is already that sense of ease, of aliveness, and of, yes, love. That all the things you've been looking for are already, and it does not require the completion of your story in the head. Your story will develop in some way, of course.

But it does not require completion. It's strange, but when you no longer need your story to work out, it actually works quite well. Jesus said, know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

He wasn't talking about some abstract truth, but a more vital truth, the truth of who you are, the essence of your being. That will make you free. And then his disciples said, but we are free already.

We are nobody's slaves. You have to look here beyond the terminology, beyond the words. No, you are the slaves of sin, Jesus said.

The original meaning of the word sin, as used in the Bible, means missing the mark, missing the mark of human existence. I would translate sin as unconsciousness. So you are slaves of unconsciousness.

You are slaves of that. You are slaves of the conditioning of your mind. There's nothing personal in this, since it is the state of humanity based on thousands of years of human conditioning.

Spiritual traditions speak of liberation, freedom, salvation, end of suffering, self-realization. Freedom from what? Freedom from mind.

Freedom from an obsession with time, with past and future. Freedom from suffering. And freedom from a mentally derived sense of self, which forms the story in the head.

I am here to tell you the good news, that there is the possibility of freedom from that absurdly limited sense of self. It is in the now that you become aware of your true identity. God, or love, is the essence of who you are.

God is not an entity that somehow is in space and controls everything. God is the essence of your being. If you go deep enough, you find that essence.

And the wonderful thing is that you don't need time for that. In fact, that's the one thing you don't need to know who you are. You can only know that now.

And that arises in a state of consciousness that I call presence. That is a state in which thought can operate but is no longer compulsive. In order to truly know who you are beyond name and form, you need to enter the now.

You can enter the now through a number of gates or portals. You can enter through your inner body. You can enter through stillness.

And you can enter through non-resistance to what is. A gateway is simply an opening. You can't get good at walking through a gateway.

You either walk through it or you don't. There are a number of gateways or entry points into the now. And in a sense, whichever gateway you use includes the others.

To walk through a gateway into the energy field of the present moment, nothing needs to be added to who you are already. That's the beauty of it. And that's very strange to the mind.

You mean that nothing needs to be added to this little me with its unsatisfying story, this me who hasn't quite made it yet? There is still so much that is not right with my life

situation. How could it be true that nothing needs to be added?

As I mentioned earlier, I'm not talking about adding something on the level of the person. You can add things on that level to your store of knowledge or expertise. You can learn a new language or learn to use a computer.

Or you can add an activity like learning to ski. They may be enjoyable, but you don't need them to fulfill yourself. And if you're no good at them, that's all right too.

It doesn't really matter. But on a deeper level, as far as who you truly are, the amazing fact is that to be present, nothing needs to be added. This is not something to believe in, but something to realize as a liberating thing that affects your entire being.

This realization is that the state of presence is already within you and is simply covered up by mental noise. And covered up also by the mind-created self that says, No, this is not true. I'm not enough yet.

I need more of this or that for my identity. But you don't need more for your identity. You need more for other things, but not for who you are, the essence of your being.

After the music, I will be introducing three gateways into the now and show you how easy it is to walk through them. These practices are so simple because they take you to your natural state and are immediately recognized by your true self. To connect with the essence of your being, it is essential to inhabit your body.

Because the body is a powerful opening into presence. To find that gateway, you sense and feel the energy field in your inner body. You feel the aliveness that is undoubtedly there, because the body is alive.

The other two gateways we'll look at will also put you in touch with that inner sense of aliveness. There is an enormous intelligence that operates throughout your body. You can't see it, but there is an organizing principle in the body that controls and regulates thousands of functions simultaneously.

The human mind would not be able to do that. It couldn't keep the body alive for two seconds. It is far too complex.

You would have to be aware of a thousand or more things at the same time. Every cell embodies intelligence. The mind is just a tiny expression of that vast intelligence.

Most humans are unaware of the aliveness in their body because their entire attention is trapped in thinking, in continuous mental noise. From their head, they look down from above at their body as if it were some alien object. That's why people say, I have a body.

A much truer statement would be, I am the body. Then you don't have a split of a me that says, I possess this thing that I call body. When you split yourself off from the body,

it is problematic like everything else that you have.

And you are not satisfied with it just as you are not satisfied with anything else either. The mind says it's too simple to just feel or sense the body. It thinks that can't work because it isn't complicated enough.

But to be able to sense the field of aliveness, the very life that is the body, is a gateway into the state of presence. There is an increased aliveness as soon as you inhabit the body, which means your attention is not exclusively on the outer world and your sense perceptions. As well, when you inhabit your body, your attention is not exclusively in thought.

Some of your attention dwells in the inner energy field of the body. The most important thing is that it takes your attention away from the otherwise continuous mental noise. When you inhabit your body, then you are rooted in your being.

You are present with your entire energy field. One could almost say every cell is present. You feel a global sense of aliveness of body.

That is an amazing thing. By doing this, you connect with an intelligence that is far greater than the human mind. And even to say connect is not totally right, because ultimately you are that more than you are the mental noise.

The inner body then becomes an anchor for staying present. This aliveness that you can feel doesn't depend on whether the body is 20 years old or 55 or 90 years old. It doesn't change throughout your life and it doesn't grow old.

Only the external vehicle grows old. This portal of the inner body is so near and so close to you, closer than your hands and your feet. Someone once said, God is closer to you than hands and feet.

And if you look at that, what could be closer than hands and feet? They are pretty close. But inside your hands and feet is even closer.

It is not a sacrilege to say, the nearest that God is to you is in your body. Everybody has been asking, where does God exist? God is the very life that you are.

But when you are only a mind-based entity, God becomes a mental image that you identify with, and then it becomes a belief or belief system. And inevitably, sooner or later, you will be in conflict with others who have a slightly different belief system. So as you listen to this, feel the inner body.

How, some people ask me, what does that mean, feel the inner body? Let's conduct a little experiment. Without moving your hand or touching anything, with your eyes closed, simply ask yourself, is there any way I can know whether my right hand is still there or

not?

Without looking, without moving your hand, is there any way you can know whether your right hand still exists? That question will draw your attention away from mental noise and thinking. The mind will say, well, no, I don't know if I have a right hand or not.

The question is meaningless anyway. What's the point? I've got far more important things to think about than this.

Does that solve my problems? That's what the mind does. And I know one or two minds listening to this are now saying that.

You simply ask yourself the question, how can I know whether my right hand is still there? Is there any way I can know? That question draws your attention away from your mind, and your attention moves into the hand, and suddenly you can feel it.

Not very strong, perhaps, but there is a certain field of aliveness there. Once you inhabit your hand, then you know what it means to inhabit the body. Then you can inhabit the other hand, the left hand.

First you inhabit the right hand, and then the left hand. And now comes the strange thing. You can do it with your eyes closed or open.

Feel both hands at the same time, and feel them so completely that there is the feeling of hand. Not so much anymore a mental image of two hands, just a feeling of hand. And then even that hand disappears, and there's just a sense of aliveness.

It is subtle and quite beautiful. It is alive. Then you learn to hold attention there.

Effortlessly. You can see how your thought stream immediately slows down because there isn't enough consciousness now in the head to make thoughts out of, because your attention is moving into the body. At the same time as you feel your hands, you feel the inner aliveness in your feet.

Isn't that amazing? If you can now feel hands and feet together, this is how gradually you bring together the feeling of inner body into one single feeling of aliveness. You feel legs and arms, and the rest of the body then becomes part of that.

There's a sense of aliveness throughout the whole body, so it becomes a single field of energy that you sense. If your eyes are closed, for a little while it may still seem as if you were observing that feeling of inner body. But then allow yourself to merge with that feeling, so you are the feeling of inner body.

It is then no longer a head observing the inner body. You are present as much in your feet as you are in your head. The center of gravity of who you are is no longer just in the head.

It's all over your body. It is everywhere equally. It is possible that some people feel a particular area more strongly than other areas, but that doesn't matter.

You don't need to go through some particular technique or movement. They can be helpful to get you into the body, but being in the body is not to be confined to performing particular movements. They are helpful, but being in the body is your natural state.

The main thing is to be able simply to walk through that gateway. The moment you enter the body, you have stepped out of identification with mental noise. And if your eyes are not closed now, close them just for a moment and hold attention in your body.

There's no effort involved. You're not trying to get anywhere. There's no trying.

Just feel yourself being rooted within, inhabiting the body and holding that feeling. That increases enormously the aliveness throughout your body. And the amazing thing is you open your eyes and you begin to perceive again visually and you're still feeling the inner body even as you perceive what is around you.

You look around and of course you hear my voice or you see the objects or people around you or you see the totality of the room where you're sitting. You continue to feel the inner body, perhaps not as strongly as when your eyes were closed, but you're still present within. And you can then perceive without interference or at least very limited interference by the conditioned mind.

Suddenly there's a clarity in your sense perceptions because they are no longer distorted by your mental noise and by all the labels that the mind throws up continuously. So by sensing that global feeling of body, you are anchored in the now and you're free of thousands of years of collective mental conditioning. You have simply stepped out of the stream of compulsive thinking and you perceive without past.

Everything is fresh and new and alive. There's an alert sense of presence, a high degree of wakefulness that pervades your entire being. It is an aliveness, an alertness in which there's no tension.

You can see the difference in quality between that state and the state of labeling things and of being immersed in continuous thought and continuous past and future and looking for yourself there. Stepping out of mental noise is very simple. The only thing that can hold you back is believing the mind when it tells you, no, you must not step out, you need to think about this now.

It's four o'clock in the morning and you need to think about this, it matters, I want your attention. Remember that all of this that we are doing is regarded by the mind as insignificant or a hindrance to what you really want or it is boring or, no, I've done that, I've done meditation for 20 years, give me something new. So see that the mind will not

regard this as important because it says your problems are important, not this.

That's what your mind says. But then you know that it's fine when the mind pretends that your problems are more important than this. You recognize that.

Oh yes, that's what the mind does, that's okay. Because this is too simple to be interesting to the mind. It loves complexity.

Give me something that I need to work out and I can think about. I'm pointing this out because otherwise if you don't know that, the mind can draw your attention back completely. As you listen to the music now, continue to hold attention in the body, being present within and without at the same time.

Listen to it with your whole body. GATEWAY OF SILENCE Now we move on to another gateway which is not separate from that of the inner body. It is the gateway of silence.

Usually when you use your listening faculty, you listen to some sound. You listen to this or you listen to that. Listen to the silence.

Acknowledge the dimension of silence. There may happen to be some silence in the room where you are now. It may not be total, but still there is an enormous amount of silence in the room.

This is, so to speak, the background to the sound. The sounds that arise always arise out of the silence. How do we acknowledge silence?

Simply by noticing it. To acknowledge means to notice. An interesting thing happens when you suddenly notice that there is silence.

Your alertness increases. Because without alertness, you cannot notice silence. You can notice sound with relatively little alertness because it imposes itself.

You don't need alertness for sound, unless it is a very faint sound or a sound that is becoming faint and ends in silence. Then you need an increasing alertness. So simply notice that the dimension of silence is there.

That means that you pay attention to it. That means you listen to the silence and to the mind that is meaningless because the mind says, well, there's nothing to listen to. And that is precisely the point.

When you notice silence as an undercurrent, a background, it's there in the most unlikely places. But you usually wouldn't have been aware of it. The noticing of silence is insignificant to the mind because there's nothing going on in the silence.

The mind looks for something. The mind would never look for silence. The mind is noisy, so it resonates with noise, external noise.

It likes that. By the way, that's the reason why our civilization is the noisiest ever on the planet. This civilization produces an enormous amount of noise through machines and artificially generated noise because it is the most mind-identified civilization.

What happens inside you when you notice silence? You can be aware of silence only through increased alertness. And that increased alertness is an inner stillness.

When you notice silence, and you may notice it only for one second, but at that moment the mind is still, it is only with inner stillness that you can be aware of outer silence. You cannot be aware of outer silence with thought. Thought may come in after you've noticed it, but in the moment of noticing, of being aware of it, there's no thinking.

Perhaps two seconds later you say, oh, it's so silent here. Or the mind says, yes, I noticed it. And then the mind says, okay, we've done that.

Now what's the next thing? You can see that only when you are fully present can you notice silence. Now I'm going to ring a Tibetan bell.

The sound of the bell will gradually subside. Just follow the sound with your attention until it subsides. You will notice that to follow the sound when it becomes weaker, a greater alertness is required than at the beginning of the sound.

What's left after the sound subsides is simply a field of alertness, which is stillness. And now as you listen to the sound, be aware not just of the sound, but of the alertness, the awareness through and in which the sound happens. And now to deepen it, listen to the sound with your whole body, so to speak.

Listen with every cell of your body so that the field of alertness is your entire energy field. You listen and you're aware of the field of alertness and that which arises in it, which is the sound in this case. What remains is simply the field of alertness, of alert presence.

And the same can happen when you perceive visually. You look and you see sense objects in your visual field. Usually the objects, the forms, are all that people see.

And the forms draw in your attention completely. Whatever is in your visual field, there's also the underlying field of alertness in which the visual perception arises. And that is inseparable from the feeling of the aliveness of the inner body, the global alertness.

When you live like that, there's now a dimension there that you were not aware of before. You are now aware of the essence of your being, which is the field of now. You are aware of what we could call spaciousness that is around things and that pervades everything.

The gateway of silence and the gateway of the inner body cannot be separated. They are

really one. Both portals bring you into the state of presence.

As you listen to the music that follows, listen also to the silence in between the sounds and the silence that is there underneath the sounds. GATEWAY OF ACCEPTANCE
Accepting each moment as it is is perhaps the most direct gateway to inner peace. And you will see it is also connected to the gateways of the inner body and of silence.

When we say each moment, we mean, of course, this moment, now. Because that's all there ever is. The word yes takes you through the gateway of this moment.

Say yes to this moment. And immediately you can sense an increased aliveness in the body. Accept this moment the way it is.

Why? Because when you argue with what is, you suffer. You are not at peace.

With a yes to this moment, no matter what this moment brings, you are out of the prison of the mind which lives in and through denial of this moment. The thinking mind lives through no to the moment. So this is the gateway of yes to now.

To walk through the gateway of now, you have to be in inner alignment with what we could call the suchness of this moment. If the yes is full and uncompromising and the now is embraced fully, there's a sudden heightening of alertness. And through that increased alertness, your sense perceptions become enormously more acute.

It's not just that the colors and the shapes have an aliveness. It goes beyond sense perception. You sense the deep aliveness of everything.

You sense it in the world of nature, but you even sense it in so-called inanimate objects. Even they emanate an aliveness. Sometimes what arises in the now may be unpleasant.

There may be noise or drama, things breaking down, loss or illness of some kind, or things collapsing all around you. This will happen because the forms of life continuously disappear and dissolve. Forms don't last for very long.

So I'm not saying the now is always fine and just be happy. That doesn't work. There are things that are dreadful that happen in the now.

At this very moment on the planet, many, many dreadful things are happening, although they may not be in your field of consciousness. All you can do is simply to surrender to the now and whatever appears in your field of consciousness at this moment. That's where the power arises.

And even if it is awful, you don't even call it awful anymore. You allow it so completely that something deeper than the appearance emerges as the goodness beyond opposites. So you don't become happy when something nice happens and unhappy when something bad happens.

That distinction goes. There is simply the is-ness of now. There's no longer the calling it this or calling it that, a me saying, yes, I like, I want, or no, I don't like, I don't want.

The me dissolves by simply allowing the now. That is the process of dissolving illusion through the simple act of allowing the is-ness of this moment. Loss always happens in one's life.

Loss of possessions, loss of a human being, loss of some position or status. When this happens, the me says, I'm no longer in control. Who am I now?

Any kind of loss would usually increase unhappiness. But it is always a great opportunity for surrendering into what really is a sense of space left by the form that just dissolved. That spaciousness is painful to the mind.

It is like a limb is being torn from your body and a big hole suddenly appears. It could be the loss of somebody close to you, either through somebody leaving you or somebody dying. And that is painful.

But spiritually, there is a great opportunity if you can accept and surrender to the simple fact that all forms of life dissolve sooner or later. Every form of life leaves you sooner or later. Knowing that, when a form goes, you are able to allow it, offer no resistance.

Before you are likely to be able to accept a major loss in your life without resistance, you can practice accepting with little things. You dropped a dish and break it. It is as it is.

You pick it up and throw away the pieces. You are stuck in traffic. Allow the traffic jam to be without reacting to it.

It is as it is. The car is not moving. It is a fact.

No matter how much I fume, it won't move any further. This moment is as it is. So start by allowing and surrendering to little things.

Some people learn surrender when they travel to India because very often things don't work as they should there. So they have to practice allowing because if they don't allow, they become very unhappy. But you don't have to go to India.

It happens everywhere. The mind insists, Forms should not dissolve. People should not die.

There should be no loss. If I ran the universe, these things would not happen. So first they surrender in little things, and then something may happen that requires a big surrender, death, great loss of one kind or another.

With every kind of loss, you surrender to the emptiness that the form has left behind. If you can accept that totally, there is a deep peace. When a form has dissolved, there is a

spaciousness, an emptiness.

This is why through dreadful loss some people have gone through this inner transformation and found the peace that passes all understanding. Some of those people lost everything all at once, one hole after another until nothing was left but holes, emptiness in their lives. Business collapsed, wife and children left, car gone, credit cards gone, and even the physical body may be no longer working.

Everything gone, and suddenly they woke up out of identification with content. They woke up out of identification with form. In the midst of all of that loss and emptiness, they suddenly realized, Oh, I feel so peaceful.

Such deep peace and aliveness. What is this? They couldn't understand it.

This must have happened to Jesus. Maybe it is not reported in the Gospels. The peace that passeth all understanding.

He didn't understand it either. The mind cannot understand it. The origin of suffering is not accepting what is in your life now.

So practice allowing this moment to be as it is. This is a simple but radical spiritual practice. It's a practice that leads to inner peace.

We are coming to the end of our time together, so let me summarize these gateways to inner peace. The body loves to receive your attention. When you enter into the inner body and abide there, it is as if each cell is singing a song of gratitude.

Each cell is enjoying increased life because you have given it attention. One of the most powerful and preventative practices for overall health and well-being is to be with your attention in the inner body. You can see how the three gateways to inner peace I have presented here are all really the same.

And with all of them there is an immediate increase in alertness. It's like a dimmer switch. It was turned on at the lowest, and then you turn it up to the highest.

Silence brings you to stillness, to a state of thoughtlessness that is worry-free. It is a deeply restful state that replenishes one's whole being. Acceptance of life as it is presenting itself to you in the now means nonresistance to life.

It brings an ease to living and countless benefits. Use these gateways. Make them part of your daily practice.

Once you become familiar with that state of spacious presence, you notice the difference between that state and the normal human state. Consider normal up to now, that is. As you abide in the now, more and more you will realize that your home is the state of presence you experience in this timeless dimension.

The now is your home. You cannot fall out of that. You don't need to search for yourself anymore.

You are safe. You are home. As you abide in the now, you are aware of your essence which is beyond name and form.

This is self-realization. And it is so simple. When you know who you truly are, the false in life falls away.

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